Victory in European Patent Office over Hessian

1414. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have won the first major battle before European Patent Office over Hessian (a variety of jute cloth used for packing and as land cover) which will prove to be a much needed reprive for the jute sector:

(b) if so, whether it will have any impact on reduction of dumping duty on import of jute bags from Indian; and

(c) to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) Yes, sir. India won the European Patent Case on Waste Treatment using Hessian. Govt. of India through JMDC pleaded for revocation of the impugned patent and refuted the arguments of the patentee by substantiating the similarity of Hessian with Geo-textiles. JMDC also argued that the patent is against the "Order Public" because, if allowed, it would tend to block free trade and business of Hessian in European market covering 14 countries and would lead to imposition of undue royalty and license fee on the public. The Appeal Board rejected the patent on the ground of "lack of inventive steps" on 6th May, 2004.

(b) and (c) There is no anti-dumping duty on import of Indian Jute Goods in any of the European countries. Further, there is no co-relation between the patent case and dumping duty on import of Indian Jute goods. There will, therefore, be no impact on dumping duty on Import of Jute goods from India by virtue of winning the European patent battle.

Proposal for increasing the wages of NTC workers

1415. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the wages of Indian textile workers are the second lowest in the world;

(b) whether it is a fact that India's annual export of textiles is $ 12.9 billion and the textile worker is being paid an average wage of $ 0.38 an hour; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to increase the wages of Indian textile workers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) to (c) A news item carried by some of the news papers have quoted a study which has stated that the average wages of Indian workers in textile industry is $ 0.38 per hour as compared to $ 0.41 in Pakistan, $ 0.48 in Sri Lanka and $ 0.68 in China. However, a study titled "Cost benchmarking study-India *vis-a-vis* Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, China and Pakistan" got conducted by Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council has found that average wages of Indian workers during the period October, 2001 to March, 2002 was $ 0.50 per hour compared to $ 0.39 in Pakistan, $ 0.37 in Sri Lanka, $ 0.57 in China, $ 0.23 in Bangladesh and $ 0.34 in Indonesia. In the year 2003-2004, the export of textile and clothing were $ 13.2 billion.

Plight of Weaving Sector

1416. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn on the pathetic plight of the weaving sector and to the series of suicides by weavers due to their hardship and penury;

(b) if so, the State-wise details of total number of weavers suicide cases reported; and

(c) what are the measures taken to safeguard the weaving sector?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) and (b) Yes, sir. The Government has received a report from the Government of Andhra Pradesh about (13) thirteen suicidal deaths by handloom weavers due to various reasons in 11 districts of Andhra Pradesh. The reasons include financial hardships due to private debts, family problems, ill health etc. No. other state has reported any suicide by handloom weavers.

(c) Government of Andhra Pradesh have constituted an Expert Committee headed by the Hon'ble Minister of Finance, Government of